

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

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R 081112Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3066

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HAWAII

S E C R E T BANGKOK 7458

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, TH

SUBJECT : US FORCE WITHDRAWALS

1. I REVIEWED WITH MARSHAL THAWI AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE BROADOUTLINE OF OUR PLANS FOR FORCE WITHDRAWALS THIS SUMMER, USING OCCASION OF MAY 7 COURTESY CALL PRIOR TO WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS TO REEMPHASIZE OUR CONCERNS REGARDING HANOI'S INTENTIONS IN INDOCHINA AND THE VALUE WE ATTACH TO THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF US COMBAT AIR POWER BASED IN THAILAND. I REMINDED THAWI THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY HAD THE CAPABILITY TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM BUT HAD REFRAINED FROM AN ALL-OUT EFFORT DURING THE CURRENT DRY SEASON. ALTHOUGH WE ARE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS NOW, IN RESPONSE IN PART TO THE RTG DESIRE TO LOWER THE AMERICAN PROFILE, WE WILL WISH TO MAINTAIN SUBSTANTIAL FORCES NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 25,000 THROUGH THE 1975 DRY SEASON.

2. THAWI ACKNOWLEDGED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF US CONCERNS AND OUR EFFORTS TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN THE SEA AREA. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION

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BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE GVN AHD BEEN COMPLICATED BY

SOUTH VIETNAMESE ACTION IN UNILATERALLY EXTENDING ITS TERRITORIAL FISHING RIGHTS AND SEIZING THAI BOATS. UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THE RTG CANNOT EXPECT MUCH SYMPATHY FOR THE PRESENCE OF USAF AIRCRAFT COMMITTED TO SUPPORT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. IF THE SITUATION IS FURTHER EXACERBATED, THE JUSTIFICATION FOR US AIR POWER IN THAILAND WOULD, IN THAWI'S OPINION, BECOME MUCH MORE TENUOUS.

3. I PROMISED TO REPORT THAWI'S VIEWS TO OUR EMBASSY IN SAIGON, AT THE SAME TIME COMMENDING THE RTG FOR THE RESTRAINT WITH WHICH THE MFA HAS HANDLED THE FISHERIES ISSUE WITH THE PRESS. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SUGGESTION FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS SEEMED A GOOD WAY TO DEFUSE THE ISSUE. I ALSO NOTED THAT THE GVN 50-MILE EXTENSION OF ITS FISHING RIGHTS HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED LONG SINCE AND THAT THE PROPER FORUM FOR RESOLVING THE BROADER JURIDICAL QUESTION WOULD BE THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA. (SEE SEPTEL FOR AN ANALYSIS OF THE FISHING DISPUTE.)
KINTNER

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NNN

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